
MR. KING's
A P O L O G Y;

OR A

Reply to his Calumniators.

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A P O L O G Y;

OR A

REPLY to his CALUMNIATORS.

THE SUBJECTS TREATED, AND FACTS STATED,
WILL BE FOUND MATERIALLY TO CONCERN
EVERY PERSON WHO RESIDES IN A
GREAT METROPOLIS.

PLUS APUD ME RATIO VALEBIT QUÆM VULGI OPINIO.

L O N D O N :

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1798.

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MR. KING'S
APOLOGY, &c.

THERE is no security or ease for a people, where an illiterate magistrate assumes the right of receiving whatever charges he pleases from men notoriously infamous, from avowed prostitutes, or from the ruffians of his office (who regret more the loss of a reward, than feel remorse at sacrificing an innocent life), from persons whose testimony is inadmissible at every tribunal.—If he has a right of publicly exhibiting

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infamous

infamous accusations against whom he chuses, in a crowded room of newspaper reporters, thief-takers, tale-bearers, to exaggerate and promulgate them, as interest, wantonness, or malignity suggests—and how is it to be avoided, when we are at the mercy of insolence, without controul, and power without discretion.

Learning softens the mind and tempers the passions ; an uneducated man suddenly exalted is the most merciless of all tyrants ; arguments make no impression on ignorance, and reason has no influence on imbecility—We may console ourselves with the hopes of future redress ; but, in the interim, we are compelled to submit ; to endure the torture of brutal abuse, and be exposed to the misconstruction of public conjecture.

Mr. Bond recollects his disgraceful origin : *Lupus pilum mutat non mentem*—His station is changed, but his disposition has not varied ; the callous temper of the thief-taker still predominates ; it is betrayed in a vulgar and savage diction, in a slang idiom, in the hard lineaments of a ferocious visage : his interrogations are extraneous and impertinent ; his determinations a sarcasm on justice, and evince in what profound contempt

contempt the magistracy of Middlesex was held, when such a man was incorporated in it.

Even before a jury, when witnesses on all sides are examined, and an acute judge cautiously sums up the evidence, the mind receives a bias, and an erroneous opinion is formed. It cannot be otherwise, unless a judge were to possess intuitive knowledge, and the auditors were to be inspired. What confusion then must arise from the adjudications of a vain-glorious ideot, inflexibly stupid, and incorrigibly conceited; in unbounded authority, rejecting remonstrance, checking, oppressing, and tyrannizing like a Bashaw? The accusation operates like a conviction, and the fairest fame is tarnished by first impressions—How much more then is that man injured, who has been always envired by calumny—has his whole life been a victim to prejudice—who, by many and important transactions, has been unavoidably thrown into courts and contests—libelled by newspapers—abused by counsel—misrepresented, reviled and outraged? How is a vulnerable man to escape laceration, where even a mail of innocence affords no protection.

* Petty Justices, by a novel assumption unknown since the days of the Court of High Commission, carry

carry on a trade, which, as far as it reaches, frustrates the advantage of trial by jury, and is indelible disgrace to the man who unfortunately becomes the object of their investigation.

There is a large room in Bow-Street, ranged and planed in mimic form of the Courts at Westminster, where the accused, be the complainant whom he may, must submit to every insult—to be dragged to the tribunal by runners, to be placed within the bar, to be retained there an hour—a day—if his worship so commands it.—Guilty or guiltless he stands at bay, to be pointed at by the crowd, and outraged by a wretch who owes his power to a licentious exercise of it.—The violent policy of this Epoch requires the aid of men who could be subservient without scruples, and act without compunction, and a habit of insolence has incapacitated him from being civil, when there is no motive for asperity. This practice has always been deemed illegal by those who had the power to inhibit it : has been bitterly decried by those who have suffered by it, but no serious attempt has been made to suppress it ; the emergency of the times has augmented its vigor ; it is no longer insignificant in its effects, or circumscribed in its sphere of action ; it extends its havoc without controul, and menaces
more

more mischief than the tyranny of the Star-chamber.

Two girls, professing themselves to be women of the town, pretended that I had an amorous intercourse with them, and had accompanied it with the whim of a scholastic discipline, inflicted with more than customary severity ; that they had received the slender remuneration of a guinea for it, but yet had ventured on a second visit, and had indulged me in a similar amusement.—I feel perplexed in the repetition of this disgraceful narrative, though the indecent magistrate felt no shame in hearing and encouraging a libidinous description of a brothel-revel, in the gross and obscene language of inebriated women, inventing and wantoning as their foul imagination prompted.—Can I ever forget the frightful motley assembly of that horrid evening ? the yell of riot of his gang ; his stuttering efforts of rhetoric ; the fist waving in the air, or dashed upon the desk ; the buffoon mirth and obstreperous laugh ; did I till that moment fancy that there could be such a hideous scene in the heart of a metropolis where refinement is at its zenith, and the police boasts of the strictest regulation ? Supposing the whole of the womens deposition true, and he must have credited it all or have dismissed the complaint, it was but a mutual contract,

tract, a reciprocal agreement, and should have been indignantly discharged as *contra bonos mores*; but he could not forego the happy opportunity of indulging his vanity—By a strange inversion of the nature of things, he called it an assault, and required bail for it, that the incident might not expire; that he might blazon his name and eloquence in his darling newspapers, and astonish the town with a new occurrence, and the wonderful vigilance of his active magistracy.

There is no difficulty in accusation, but the consistency of a story and the corroboration that accompanies truth is wanting to falsehood—not compunction of feeling perhaps, but a dread of punishment, brought the women the next day to the Marlborough Street office to sign and swear a recantation of assertions which they found it impossible to verify, and dangerous to defend*; they
acknow-

* ANN TAYLOR, of One Tun Court, in the Parish of St. Martin's in the Fields, and MARIA TOWERS, of the same place, maketh oath, and saith: And first Ann Taylor saith, That all she accused Mr. JOHN KING of, before Mr. Justice BOND, on the 20th July instant, was a fabrication, and utterly false, and done to extort money from the said Mr. KING, she being told that he would pay a large sum of money rather than be so accused; and that one of the constables, who assisted them in taking him, gave them liquor, and told them that, if they stuck to the story, they would
make

acknowledged perjury and fraud—for they swore that it was a stratagem suggested by one of the Bow Street banditti, as a peculiar and ingenious plan, that would inevitably produce enormous gain—but no confutation can stem the stream of slander,—the chastity of Diana questioned is sullied, the rectitude of Aristides arraigned raises suspicion, and an imputation against one who pretends to no monkish sanctity, no fastidious morals, who has always scorned the convenience of hypocrisy, and held the stings of conscience more momentous than the versatile opinions of an uncharitable world, must be content to endure incessant obloquy, with the consolation of not deserving it.—If a dirty Justice has the power of dealing out infamy and invading domestic repose as he pleases, who that has the misfortune of being known to him is secure from his machinations, if immaculacy affords no shelter, and the reputation of a family is no exemption.

make a good penny of him.—And MARIA TOWERS for herself saith, That what she said against Mr. JOHN KING to Justice BOND, at Bow Street, on the 20th July instant, was a false deposition, and invented to extort money from the said Mr. KING.

JOHN CHRISTIE,

J. MUMFORD,

RICHARD DAVIES,

} Witnesses.

ANN TAYLOR.

MARIA TOWERS,

her X mark.

July 23, 1798

The

The force of this prejudice is so well comprehended by those who derive subsistence from the management of it, that even when a complaint is discharged, the Newspaper Reporters flock round the accused and demand a bribe to suppress it, so aware are they that an accusation, though fictitious, is a stigma, and that disgrace and Bow Street are inseparable.

Whether these extortioners are in league with the Magistrate or his gang, those may say who are skilled in the maurauding science of Police Offices ; or whether the robbers who have the temerity to practise their profession in his presence, are known to him I cannot tell ; but certain it is my hat was stolen, and my pockets rifled at the very instant the inflated Oracle was stammering out professions of continence, which many knew to be insincere, and juridical axioms which no one understood ; and when I complained of so unparalelled an outrage, instead of amazement and horror, instead of ordering an immediate scrutiny, he broke out into a horse laugh, and said “ Sir, you have to-night “ charged my conduct with many faults, do you “ mean to charge me with other mens’ robberies “ also ? how can I help them ! ”—this eloquent ejaculation was the only satisfaction I received for my loss ; was theft, at the seat of justice in the
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very moment of administering it, a subject of mirth? was it characteristic of magisterial dignity, or calculated to awe the offenders? is this office really for the detection and punishment of culprits, or a seminary for their initiation and progress?

Though the girls complained of their first reception, they confessed they accepted a second invitation—they were not inveigled by new emissaries to another rendezvous, for a different customer, or for a greater present; but by the same women for the same person, at the same tavern, and for the same price; and they acknowledged that they left the house without making any complaint to the mistress of it. What a preposterous incongruity is this story! What irreconcilable falsehoods pervade every circumstance of it! To be maltreated, and not instantly complain of it, but suspend the complaint for a year! To be ill used by a man, and voluntarily return to him again, is more than common madness, and requires more than common credulity to gain it belief; and yet this fellow, instead of punishing the perjury, and stopping an indecent recital, encouraged it for eight hours—It was recapitulated, dwelt upon, varied and tortured into every shape that fancy and expression could give it, to gratify

a lascivious dotard, and divert a despicable audience.—He said, he could not perceive any inconsistency or improbability in the narrative; and that the oath of harlots weighed with him as much as that of modest women; as if a life of profligacy and debauch did not vitiate the mind, and render those, who prostituted their persons for subsistence, as indifferent to the sacredness of an oath as they are insensible to shame.

Governments, however lenient, are tolerated evils; if we were by nature benevolent and just, there would be no transgressions to correct, no delinquency to chastise. Laws are shackles, however indispensable; and governments expensive and irksome, however mild and equitable; yet individuals assented to a compact which, in depriving them of a portion of liberty, proffered general good; but if the laws, under the plausible aspect of safeguard, are perverted into instruments of torture, and we are perpetually liable to the inquisitorial rack of a magistrate, we are living under the sword of Damocles—while specious benefits seem to surround us, an impending mischief is always hovering, and we have no reason for vaunting of a jurisprudence, which does not exclude more evil than it confers advantages.

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The malversations of a Justice of the Peace may seem incapable of much damage, because there is an appeal to a superior tribunal ; but the attainment of redress is lost by the exorbitant expence of it, and the bulk of the people are as effectually precluded from obtaining remedy, as if the laws had neglected to provide it : Where is the marvel then that the populace is discontented and tumultuary ! Every man who is injured and unredressed, becomes disaffected to the Government, and the implacable enemy of his wronger ; he is impatient for the favorable moment of commotion, to gratify a spirit which before vented itself in unavailing murmurs—Shall we presume on the stability of human institutions, after the example of recent events ? Have we not seen a mighty monarchy suddenly rent to pieces ? Have never intestine broils convulsed and desolated our own country ? Is it intended to make essay on the people's patience, and try to what degree of tameness they may be reduced with impunity ? Is it a crisis for experiment, when they are surrounded with allurements to innovation and amendment ? If retribution retorts vengeance on its oppressors, what will screen a contemptible magistrate from the resentment he has provoked ?

Legislators

Legislators have assumed the right of depriving their fellow creatures of life ; but there is another tribunal, where their decisions may be examined by different criterions, than Hales or Holt's Maxims of Crown Law.—The principles of a sanguinary policy, which first created a disproportionate inequality in society, and then punishes with death the theft it incites, is probably a perversion of ethics, and our capital punishments perhaps unqualified murders—Can a wretched subordinate magistrate comprehend the allotment of chastisement commensurate to offence ? or the virtuous heroism of preferring honor to existence ?—Is such a man a proper guardian of our lives and fame ?—But as rigid laws are levelled at the indigent, they were committed to the basest hands.

Persons of narrow conception have considered the decisions of Courts of Judicature as standards of right and wrong ; but those who have examined them, and reflected that Judges are not of a different order of beings, that they associate with other men, converse with them, are captivated by the same accomplishments, detest the same atrocities, imbibe their prejudices, and catch their passions : those who have considered the intricacies of controversy, the cavils of counsel, the subterfuges

fuges of lawyers, know that human sagacity is incompetent to discriminate the pretensions of the just, and detect the endless subtleties of fraud ; if error then results from the most exquisite composition of human wisdom, what is there not to be dreaded from a Police Office, where there is neither conscience to stimulate, or learning to instruct.

Let a merchant, however eminent, be carried to Bow-Street, on an accusation of forgery or misdemeanour, if the charge, whether true or false, be positively sworn, though the accuser absconds the instant after, is never more heard of, and the charge is never substantiated, the imputation will last for ever ; many will fancy he was guilty, though there was no proof of it, and others who doubt it will gratify their malignity, by the propagation of what they don't believe ? and though the accusation was groundless, and is refuted, the newspapers will disseminate it over the country ; it will be cried through the metropolis ; it will be plaistered on the walls, and undergoes the same publicity and uproar as if the allegation had been followed by conviction ; guilt and rectitude are confounded in undistinguished slander—it is not an ordeal to purify and brighten, but to dim and contaminate.—Mr. Bond is no novice ;

novice ; he has waded thro' life's various scenes, from carousing on the bloody reward of slaughtered delinquents, to the dignity of Magistrate of the supreme county of England—he knows critically the stile of story that will amaze and dupe the town, and the utter impossibility of cancelling its impression ; or why does he sometimes deign to favour particular persons with a secret examination and conceal it ? but is it to be left to such a man's humanity and prudence who is to be devoted, or who saved ? Innocence has been sustained and defended by the courage of Lord Kenyon ; but at Bow Street integrity has no resource ; it is collision with the leper, and pollution follows contact.

So fluctuating is falsehood, and so indiscreet are the exaggerations of malice, that the consistency which would render a story specious is frustrated in the incompatible relations of it ;—the tale has been so embellished by folly, and so exaggerated by rancour, that it retains no feature of its original aspect. As I did not betray any symptoms of intimidation, their schemes were disconcerted, and it seemed probable that the prosecution would end in the accusation, and I remain under the odium of an imputation, without a trial to acquit me of it. To prevent this, I demanded the womens commitment

mitment under the vagrant act, or that at least they might be bound to prosecute, that if they failed in the charge they preferred, they might be punished for the perjury. As they were acknowledged prostitutes, it was his duty to have committed them without a suggestion; but Mr. Bond refused to do either; his conduct had evinced a premature adjudication, he had used unfair and violent means to establish his opinion, and was resolved to interdict a justification that must impeach his impartiality or his understanding.—I solicited pen and ink, to note his extraordinary deportment, but these too were denied me.—If we arm the wild hand of a savage, we must expect it exercised in brutality and outrage; and when we delegate power to base minds, we must expect it to diffuse itself in wantonness and abuse.—If Government did not intend to set the people at defiance, and were aware how many citizens are alienated by the obnoxious behaviour of this man, he would not be suffered to domineer in spite of universal abhorrence.

That the civilization and prosperity of the Roman Empire might not corrupt its morals, Censors were instituted to guard them, and to preserve the virtue and simplicity of the primitive ages; the most venerable of the community were selected
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for this office; men of exemplary sanctity and unsullied character; it was the supreme and most dignified rank in the state; neither Plebeian or Consul was exempt from their scrutiny; their censures operated like punishments, and their praises conferred honour—As long as the Censors inspected with rigor and animadverted with impartiality, the Roman virtue was maintained in its pristine purity; but in these days, we are derided with a mock tribunal of a different species; men erect themselves without a commission of delegation, without other authority than their own deputation; these censors have not waited for the suffrages of their fellow-citizens; but self-appointed to their prints convert the blessings of the press into instruments for extortion.—Their occupation is not to form the principles of the people, but to project means of levying contributions on them—they don't discriminate between the amiableness of virtue and the deformity of vice; but, like the Swiss mercenary, enlist under any banner for pay—they prowl the metropolis for the innocent, the timid, and the opulent, and menace them with their fulminations, if they are not paid for suffering virtue to escape detraction, and vice revel undisturbed; their pens have discovered the art of transmutation, like an alchemical process, their ink is converted into gold;

gold; for gold they may be hired to blaspheme heaven or consecrate Pandemonium.—They are enamoured with no sex, they are attached to no principles, they reverence no religion; Whigs, Tories, Aristocrats, Democrats, Royalists, Republicans, Infidels, and Bigots, are involved in equal obloquy; beauty cannot charm them—distress excites no commiseration—they wage universal war, and the Press itself will be destroyed or rendered nugatory by this abuse, if the Legislature can devise no means of repressing them.

Let us consider by what description of persons newspapers are conducted; if there are examples of respectable men, quitting lucrative and honourable conditions, to assume the office of Editors, let them stand forward and astonish the world with the novelty of the instances:—but if the managers of these prints are generally insolvent tradesmen or decayed gentlemen, so deficient in honesty or providence that they were incapable of living on their former professions or fortunes—if they are adventurers or marauders, who must subsist by literary depredation, or starve—what wonder is it that the Press has become a system of speculation, and newspapers vehicles of swindling—Twenty pounds was demanded of me by one Printer, and thirty by another, as doceurs for silence on this important oc-

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casion.

casion.—I met the proposals with scorn, and for my temerity was made the theme of incessant scurrility during a whole summer—Their rage has not subsided, and these divulgations are not calculated to calm it ; but the hornets lost their sting in former wounds—they may repeat their assaults, but they have become impotent and harmless—their commerce is at last understood ; they have betrayed the arcana of their business ; their commendations are no longer occasions of exultation, and their calumny is no more motive for vexation.

The most profound Legislators have been puzzled how to restrain the wantonness of the Press, without endangering its liberty ; all join in reprobating the licentiousness, instead of suggesting a remedy : if in assailing the minister of despotism, it cannot be prevented from the murder of private reputations, it is problematical whether we derive more benefit from its freedom, than injury from the abuse : The gentlemen of the bar are not sufficiently pure to defy its attacks—they are vulnerable, and shun an adversary whom they dare not irritate ; they are better adepts too in the practice of scurrility, than in patience to bear its retorts. Even some Judges have wanted magnanimity to condemn it, they have succumbed to despicable assailants ; epithets
of

of derision offended their dignity, and reflections on their knowledge alarmed their pride ; they deprecated an enemy they were afraid to combat, and condescended to barter connivance for fulsome encomiums.

If this story is false, if it is the invention of a prostitute, or a suggestion of one of the Bow Street miscreants ; if before it is investigated, before a verdict, and before a trial, I have been the subject of scandalous comment, traduced without reflection, reviled without charity, what am I to think of public candour ? How must I lament public credulity, or abhor its illiberality ? Either historians have celebrated us for a generosity, which is not really characteristic of the English, or we have strangely degenerated.

When we see the people vehement and exasperated ; resentful, as if they had received personal injury, discussing, vociferating, deciding, and condemning, before they know that they have conceived a right prepossession, and before they have examined the proofs that should warrant indignation, we are astonished at their impetuosity ; it pains us to see with what facility a nation may be duped, and the guiltless sacrificed ; how an artful tale may obtain credit, interest the passions, and excite ferment, when the eagerness has been all the while about a fiction, and the agitation
upon

upon a vague rumour—But how is a single individual to stem the torrent of headlong prejudice? By what caution shall he ward off defamation? By what deportment can he silence slander?—I once indited a printer of a newspaper, to gratify my friends, and to manifest the unjustness of a libel. I expended a hundred and fifty pounds in the prosecution. I convicted and triumphed over him; but many such victories would reduce a man to indigence,

It has been said, that to be persecuted by many enemies is equally a proof of eminence, as being supported by many friends; but I am not ambitious of becoming illustrious by martyrdom, or of living in constant contests, to show I am worthy of opponents. I would overcome a prejudice groundlessly excited, and disarm an antipathy which I have not merited; it has haunted me through life, without my knowing why it was engendered, or my adversaries why they adopted it.—Even Courts of Judicature, which ought to have dispelled it, were swayed by it and carried in the vortex; influenced by an imperceptible bias, facts and evidence have been borne down by chimerical conjectures.—This prepossession has animated the spirit of enterprize; it has summoned adventurers to experiment—experiments have encreased prejudice, and prejudice has encouraged

couraged experiments ; it has become a series of action and re-action ; it is cause and effect alternately producing each other in progression and retrogradation—like Caleb Williams, I am destined a living elucidation of the author's principle, an instance of one man's being harrassed and crushed by suspicion, while under an impervious duplicity, another like Falkland may murder with impunity.

I believe it is generally known, for many have smarted under its operation, that the proprietors of newspapers have deserted the avowed thesis of their undertakings for a more lucrative commerce ; they have found the wages of wasteful administrations, and the pillage of private individuals, more beneficial than criticisms on literature, or barren admonitions of virtue—their occupation is to select persons whose foibles or stations render them obnoxious to censure or ridicule ; some they tax for the concealment of infirmities, and some for suddenness of elevation—Men without affluence, importance, or talent, find a recompence in their deficiency, and glide along unnoticed and unmolested.—The emoluments of an extensive profession made me conspicuous and raised envy ; the misunderstandings which result from pecuniary dealings constantly required my explanation and evidence ; it drew me into notice, and marked me for newspaper plunder.

plunder. Success had made them fearless—one Editor had received 1500*l.* from the famous Lady Grosvenor; Mrs. Fitzherbert had sacrificed a fortune to another; Lady Elizabeth Luttrell, the Duchess of Cumberland, the Prince of Wales, and unnumbered others, had submitted to their exactions; every prominent and eminent character had averted a wrath they were afraid to encounter; and invigorated a fire, which resistance would have extinguished. My growing fortune seemed to promise them a mine of wealth; and, in the year 1790, a paragraph appeared in *The Times* to this effect: “That Mr. John King had obtained bills to a large amount from Mr. Rice, goldsmith, in Pall-Mall, under pretence of negociation, and had converted them to his own use.”—Never having had bills of Mr. Rice, or any transaction with him, what must have been my shock and astonishment at so daring an attack? And if this paragraph, though a forgery, was credited, and is to this moment promulgated, of what advantage is the uniform tenor of an upright conduct, if a newspaper can in a moment brand us with a crime from which a former life is no security, and a refutation of no avail? how mortifying is it to reflect, that a fiction, which cost no effort in invention, or labour to embellish, is capable of exciting a stigma never to be effaced, and a hatred never to subside!

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This iniquitous attack emboldened more ; one Paper copied from another, and no reader paused a moment to consider whether there was any truth in what he was propagating. Such injustice will corrupt people ; finding no shelter in honesty, they will have recourse to dissimulation ; they will deem themselves safer in concealment and imposture, than in openness and sincerity.—I called on Rice, who was as much shocked at the paragraph as I was ; we both went instantly to Newgate, where Walter, the printer of *The Times*, was imprisoned for another libel ; he refused to answer questions while we were both present ; but when Mr. Rice withdrew he told me, that he did not concern himself about the truth or falsehood of the paragraph ; he inserted it because it came accompanied with three guineas ; and if I wanted it contradicted, I must pay him five. My resentment at this demand, and the measures I pursued upon it, incurred the furious invectives that tortured my life for eight years—I indicted him on the paragraph ; Rice proved its falsehood, and he was convicted ; but who can often seek such ruinous redress ? the wealth of Cræsus would be scarcely sufficient to punish the author of every libel at so enormous a price—While the indictment was pending, he endeavoured to make his stories be believed by persisting in them, and his paper daily teemed with gross epithets and tales of feigned trans-

transactions ; but after conviction he confessed their falsehood and implored pardon—I am candid enough to acknowledge that I did not consider him an object of mercy, but I understood that he had earned a remission of his offences by some political apostacy, the broaching of some false news, or the detraction of popular characters ; and that whether I conceded or not, my process would be comprized in the amnesty—in seeming gratitude for my lenity, on the 27th May 1791, he inserted the following paragraph in *The Times* :

“ A Newspaper being the only corrective of
 “ many evils which exist in society, and the only
 “ means by which some injuries can be redressed,
 “ is in such cases a useful and important resource ;
 “ but the best things are liable to be abused. The
 “ multiplicity of business which arises in the con-
 “ duct of a daily publication, and the credit that
 “ must unavoidably be given to articles of intelli-
 “ gence, apparently authenticated, render it im-
 “ possible for an Editor or Printer to be so guarded
 “ as never to be the dupes of imposition. They are
 “ consequently subject to the possible misfortune of
 “ doing private injury, by their misguided efforts
 “ to promote public good. Such is the situation
 “ of the Printer of this paper, in the case of Mr.
 “ King.—The aspersions on his and Lady-Lanes-
 “ borough’s characters, which were some time since
 commented

“ commented on with hastiness and severity, appear, on investigation, to be as groundless as they were malicious. The Printer thinks it necessary to make this explanation in justice to Mr. King, and to profess his regret for having been made the accidental instrument of such calumnies.”

And as a further pledge of reconciliation, Walter, his Son, and Editor, signed a paper, which I still possess, as follows :

“ As we have convinced Mr. John King and Lady Lanesborough that we were imposed upon, in the insertion of the late injurious paragraphs that appeared against them in The Times ; and as we have this day fully contradicted them in that Paper, they have consented to drop every prosecution against us. In consideration of which, we pledge ourselves never to insert any thing against them in The Times, or any other paper. No use to be made of this paper, unless we are so ungrateful to break our promise.

JAMES WALTER.

May 27th, 1791.

WILLIAM WALTER.

WILLIAM FINEY.

But what obligation binds a man, who subsists on the propagation of scandal, on making asser-

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tions and retracting them, who holds it no turpitude to destroy characters, to affect contrition for pay, and stab again for a second exaction. This is the life of such a printer—this his gratitude—these the morals of men who set up for reformers of vice—as soon as I had given him a release I found myself assailed with more vehemence than ever.

The printers commenced the attack in the ordinary course of their avocation, the Judges were biased by reading frequent abuse, the public was prejudiced on perceiving the calumny of the papers ratified by the animadversions of the Courts; thus the contagion was every where spread, and the whole nation seemed to be in combination against a sole individual—Is it a wonder then, that in the predominancy of this prejudice some should prefer fancied claims and some counterfeit them, when there was such encouragement to speculation?—If a Chancellor or a Judge becomes a party in contentions, and joins popular clamour, is it not like a denunciation of outlawry against a man? A species of judicial anathema—is it not declaring that assertions will require no proof, that charges are believed by anticipation, and the most groundless attack may hope for success? Common slander expires without effect, but every adventurer will make an attempt when the comments of a Court evince

evinced a prejudication. Shall Judges exclaim, "this man is always here, he is perpetually in dispute?"—they are the cause of his being there, they have dragged him into their Courts, they have conjured up litigation;—if with unbiassed judgment and a firm mind they had investigated the outcry, they would have dispelled the effervescence, controversy would have ceased, and I had been rescued from persecution.

About 1792, the metropolis was infested by a gang of marauders of singular species; they procured the affidavits of obscure people in the country against persons marked out for their prey, and arrested them for such excessive sums as frightened their friends from bailing them. When their victims were in custody, a confidential agent waited on them and proffered a discharge to the pretended debt for 100l.—though no debt existed, yet those who could not find bail were glad to obtain their liberty by such a sacrifice, and they were a long time prosperous in their frauds.—I did not escape them—if they had been less desperate I should not have escaped them—slander and prejudice had marked me out for every man's experiment, I was arrested by them for 3000l. but I procured bail, was not confined, and frustrated the commencement of their scheme: I immediately moved the
Court

Court of King's Bench against them ; but these men who had before fought in ambush, and had always secreted themselves, now had the effrontery to come forward and confront their antagonist ; like other speculators, they trusted to the prevalence of a prejudice which promised more than common success—they did not calculate unwisely, my representations were received with doubt, they were heard with suspicion ; and these men were permitted to harrass and torment me for thirteen months ; at length their guilt became apparent, they could conceal it no longer, and the infatuation of the court was at an end—but it cost me 300*l.* to inculcate the truth, to eradicate error, and to obtain the justice which should have been afforded me without anxiety or struggle.

If this is a fair recital of occurrences, without metaphor or extenuation, if no one can controvert it, what little reliance is to be placed in public report ; what little faith in the declamations of a newspaper, or in the decisions of Courts.—We do not always discover the truth, even when the passions are not roused, and no motive operates to mislead us.—Sir Walter Raleigh could not discover the right circumstances of an event which occurred under his own window in the Tower ; three persons he successively sent out to learn
it

it brought him contradictory accounts of it; they did not vary in trifling points, and agree in the main story; but they all related it essentially different—So difficult is it to ascertain a simple fact, though it happens almost in our sight: How then are we to judge of common rumour, which either folly fabricates, to appear intelligent, or rancour disseminates to gratify hatred?

Every individual is at the mercy of a printer, who has the command of a battery, which he may play upon whoever he chuses to torture. No man can match him who is not the proprietor of another print: To reply in a pamphlet is *contra torrentem brachia dirigere*—the newspaper is in more circulation—is daily repeated, and continues to be read, when the pamphlet and its subject is buried in oblivion.

An insolvent tradesman, lolling in a coach and four, could not suddenly emerge from poverty to opulence by the ordinary profits of his paper; but he discovered a shorter road to riches—a mode of robbery as atrocious as any of the thefts specified in the criminal code, but which no one has had the courage to punish. I have stood almost alone in opposition; and the public, which had neither spirit or generosity to sustain a man who

fought

fought their cause, have had the indiscretion to assist their enemy,

Falsehood begets falsehood, and the success of an enterprize animates new speculators---One Phillips, an illiterate, but not an ignorant man, of a sullen vindictive pertinacious temper, came next on the stage ; he saw me, like an Azazel, bearing every one's iniquities and thought it no sin to augment the burthen---The late Earl of Sandwich, the late Lord Falkland, Mr. Speed, M.P. and Mr. Delves Broughton, had granted him an annuity, which for two years had been regularly paid ; but Lord Sandwich died, Mr. Broughton went to the continent, and the payment of the annuity was discontinued ; he indited all the parties for a conspiracy, in misrepresenting their circumstances, and included me in it, because they had dined with me the day they received the money : I was however instantly acquitted ; but, anxious to be morally vindicated, as well as legally absolved, I assented to an arbitration, which was to mulct me with them in proportion to any degree of guilt that might be discovered in my conduct---Mr. Alexander Champion was named arbiter ; Mr. Champion had read newspapers, had frequently listened to the insinuations of counsel, and had imbibed a venom from them, to which no evidence in this discussion could prove an

an antidote—By a paradox which was never comprehended, and no disquisition in Court could unravel, he pronounced me free of the guilt imputed, and yet bound me with the others to pay Phillips's principal and interest.—Falkland was a pauper Lord, Speed had eloped, Broughton died abroad, so the whole load fell upon me.—This business had been litigated in almost every Court, and every shape; it had been battled three years by the ablest counsel, Phillips had devised every mode that could incur expence.—I had not participated of the money, had derived no reward or benefit from it, I was not joined in the security literally or implied; and yet I was compelled to pay 10,000*l.* for to so much, with the enormous expences, did the money now amount.

Mr. Erskine and Mr. Garrow had been bold enough to tell the Court, in unequivocal terms, that the award was absurd and inequitable, inconsistent in language, and a solecism in sense: Mr. Erskine went farther; he has manfully declared his opinion to me in writing, to demonstrate that his public sentiments were not the common place jargon of profession—not a blaze of eloquence—figures of rhetoric—but his real, serious, and decided judgment: Yet the Judges could afford no redress; they said they had no power to examine

amine into the motives of an arbitrator, or circumscribe his discretion; and I was debarred from an appeal to equity by the customary rule of Court. I contended that the rule was an invasion of the province of the Court of Equity; and my opinion was supported by the greatest law authorities; I would not allow precedent to prevail against principle: But to dispute the prerogative of the Court was transferring the quarrel from Phillips's claim to a personal contest with the Judges: it seemed an unparalleled presumption in a common man to question its jurisdiction; and the Judges repelled my objections, without arguing them. If the Court of Chancery is paramount to the Court of King's Bench (as our Constitution designed it), it is the Chancellor's duty to declare it, and maintain it—individuals should not be bewildered in conflicts where it belongs to him to be combatant, and where he cannot be neuter, without betraying the solemn trust that is reposed in him.

I was seized at Bath for a contempt of Court, imprisoned in the city gaol like a felon, carried from it to the King's Bench prison, brought up to the Court, remanded again to the Bench, carried before the Court again, and again remanded. The Judges seemed perplexed to defend an authority

authority which cannot be supported; if the Court of Chancery has a supreme jurisdiction. I persevered, and my Counsel defended my doctrine. I insisted that I was entitled to redress from the Court of Equity, and that the Judges could not interdict my appeal to it—but resistance was ineffectual; there was no alternative between perpetual imprisonment or compliance; I was compelled to pay the money, never retracted my opinion, and the point remains undecided*.

I have been forced into contests, and upbraided for situations into which I never voluntarily entered, and from whence I was unable to extricate myself. It was the artifice of my adversaries to involve me in strife, and then cry out that I was fond of controversy, because I was always in it.—I saw the effect of this cunning, and to baffle it, I call God to witness that I have frequently submitted to the grossest impositions to avoid disputes, where I was to contend with the twofold

* Sir Thomas Broughton regretted that I had suffered so in a transaction where his son was a party;—he felt for the wrong that was done me—accompanied me into Court—never departed from my side, and sent me 2,000*l.* for his son.—This act needs no comment—it astonishes and delights whoever hears of it.

operation of fraudulent designs of a defendant, and the insuperable prepossession of Judges.

Thomas Martyn, who had exhausted twenty years of his life in a revengeful quarrel with the Vicar of St. Ann's, Soho, had afterwards resigned the ministry of the gospel for temporal pursuits—had been a half-pay officer, a gambler, a money-monger, a Cutler, and a cut-purse, and had just been emancipated from the Fleet by an act of insolvency, was allured by my tempting situation to endeavour making himself some recompence for his disasters with the Vicar, and the sufferings of a five year's incarceration.—He began his enterprize by instituting fictitious debts—In all these he failed, and was indited for perjury—Pending his inditement, he threatened to write a book, unless I dropped the inditement, and made him a present of 300l. He said he would accuse me by invention, enumerate every vice that had been committed from the days of Adam, and affix my name to the frontispiece, as the Life and Adventures of JOHN KING;—*for what need have I of truth (said he) against a man of whom any falsehood will gain credit.* Our equitable laws hang a man for stealing sixpence to buy bread, and such a man as this can elude the laws, and smile at their inefficiency. David Williams,
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the Mountebank Priest of Margaret Chapel, whose intercourse in Martyn's family gives him the prerogative of governing, advised me to quiet him with the 300l. ; that I had already experienced what injury calumnies did, whether founded or not ;—that he was certain the publication was intended, for it had been laid before him to correct ; and, though it was a balderdash performance, its inelegance and vulgarity adapted it more for common reading—to show the unsteadiness of the human mind, and what aberrations are sometimes made at the conclusion of a seemingly respectable life :—this David Williams, who had formerly professed to devote his lucubrations to the use of his species, had published a system of morals for youth—had striven to ameliorate religion by exposing its abuse—had proclaimed himself the great Apostle of Liberty, and profered a new constitution to France. This solemn pompous pedagogue, on a trial before Lord Kenyon, joined Martyn in swearing that he had never seen the book, nor did it exist any where but in my imagination. After this oath, his friend should have saved his credit by its immediate suppression ; but it is published—it exists—a flagrant instance of enormous falsehood and of abortive fraud. If Martyn had made me the Hero of some romance, his book would have equally applied,

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and might have afforded some amusement ; but it is a history of dull fabulous events, which yield no entertainment to compensate want of veracity. The ruin of this man can make no adequate amends for his atrociousnes,—the laws vengeance can inflict no effectual chastisement on a character that has been always infamous, or on circumstances that have been always desperate, *Qui procumbet bumi non habet unde cadet*,—he must escape ; for like carrion, which sinks in the eddy, or is lost in the stream, rots and infects when hoisted to the surface ;—to drag him to light is spreading contagion, it is opening Pandora's box, and tainting the region with plagues.

In the year 1794, several persons were confined on a suspicion of High Treason, and afterwards acquitted ; during their imprisonment subscriptions were opened for their subsistence, in which I joined, perhaps, somewhat more liberally than the generality of benefactors ; instantly a hue and cry was raised to destroy the credit of a humane act—my charity was called a manœuvre to entrap the unwary partakers of it, my generosity an insidious stratagem to discover Democrats ;—that I gave secret intelligence to Government of the disaffected, and received a lavish pay for my communications ; that I had an intimate intercourse
with

with Mr. Pitt and the Duke of Portland, was frequently at their houses, and they were sometimes seen at mine; they were determined that no demeanour shall elude slander, no deed be exempt from misinterpretation—no quietness and sequestration hinder pursuit and vexation:—I never was under Mr. Pitt's roof, never in the mansion of the Duke of Portland, never was honored with a visit from either of them, nor have I ever had political or other intercourse with them, or any of the emissaries or dependants of Government.—If a man is to be thus worried, and every action to be so perverted, is it not enough to deter him from all social intercourse, and make him a misanthrope?

Sometimes I have had occasion to venture on literary disquisitions; but though my thoughts were crude and indigested, they were always genuine; I never purloined sentiments from one author, or embellishment of diction from another, yet my assistants have been named, and my plagiarisms detected.—Sometimes the critics have disagreed about the writers I culled, and the auxiliaries I employed; but they all concur that it was impossible I could be the author of them; to such petty spite has malevolence descended, and so indefatigable has been its pursuit.

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I have often heard my faith called in question, as if those who had not been laved at the baptismal font, must be of a religion that prohibits the holy ablution, or as if modes of belief, like patrimonies, were hereditary, and Christians had an exclusive title of salvation,—forms of worship are as diversified as the features of the visage;—the sectarians of every religion differ in the tenets of it, as widely as religions vary from one another—every one defines the Deity after his own imagination; some are confounded in the hypothetical regions of metaphysics, and others degrade the divine nature, by assigning it human attributes; I confess the difficulty of conceiving a being without any of the properties of matter; but as far as I am able to comprehend the transcendant object of my adoration, he is not profaned by mythological fantasms, or incarnated like heathen Deities:—*He is a Being above all things that fall under our cognizance, and therefore His manner of existence is above all our conceptions.—But the One Supreme and perfect Being, upon whom the existence of all other beings and their powers originally depend, is that Being whom I mean by the word GOD.—WOLL.*—Those who condemn my credulity, are more credulous than I am.—I believe that a superlative intelligence, a divine intellectual power formed the world, and will reconcile the moral contradictions that perplex our reason,
when

when we are in a state to comprehend its œconomy, and when, perhaps, we may learn that the understanding of man is not the right measure for judgement. It is a vulgar error to imagine Atheists sceptics ; they are credulous in the worst of credulity ; they believe that all the order and arrangement of the universe is the effect of blind chance, that the Heavens came from the fortuitous motion of atoms, and term those credulous who trace effects to an Almighty cause, which they fancy are produced without a cause ;—But still I cannot assent to absurd dogmas, or subscribe to plots of pious imposition, to aid political designs, or promote priestly interest ; if the soul exists after the dissolution of the body, and is a pure spirit without length, breadth or depth ; I cannot understand the theory of infernal torments, as only substances of a corporeal tangible nature are capable of bodily suffering ; there being no elements in the formation of the soul as in bodies, there is nothing to touch and decompose ; a mode of chastisement of which we can have no idea, must be adapted to beings of whose nature we are ignorant.—And who will believe that for a crime committed in an instant, for a momentary gratification, God will doom his creatures to eternal damnation—these are our ideas of Justice, and such maxims of Justice we ascribe to God.

Every

Every nation pretends to a divine communication;—every one has boasted of a true revelation; as they are contradictory they cannot all be right, but it serves to prove that all nations have deemed it necessary, and that the light of nature has been insufficient for the instruction of mankind; whether there has been a revelation, and which is the true one, is still the point in contest.—

What is this religion which claims sole heavenly origin? is it universal and immutable, or limited and transitory? how often have its fundamental principles been changed, its texts how variously construed? are we aware that when the gospel was first announced more than forty others accompanied it? all alike claimed equal originality, and no sign attests that the genuine one is preserved, and the spurious ones rejected,—it has undergone repeated alterations and additions, it was corrected at the convention of nice; articles abrogated and fresh ones received at the Counsel of Trent; corrected and expounded anew at the reformation; again revised and amended at the restoration.—If antiquity and invariableness be recommendations, the Old Testament has the advantage over all other systems—Without being superstitious, one must wonder (if Providence does not interpose) how a wretched despised people, oppressed by
Chaldeans,

Chaldeans, Babylonians, Persians, Assyrians, Romans, and many other proud nations, with a cruelty of which there is no precedent, do still exist; their oppressors extirpated, and the oppressed vigorous as heretofore; the conquerors annihilated, and the conquered remaining,—firm in their faith, steady in their religion, and numerous as ever,—as if afflictions renovated strength, and augmented spirit bounded from oppression.

Let us recur to the morality of the gospel, and enquire whether Christians obey its injunctions? the uncharitable temper of the Protestants, and the intolerant spirit of the Catholics is an answer to the interrogatory—Jesus was an Israelite, and as if his birth was subject of regret; the tribe from whence he sprang is abhorred; he professed himself a Deist, and we inveigh against Theism:—Why do we hold Judaism in detestation, since divested of its ceremonies it is but a religion of Deism, I know not what denomination will be given to my religion, pretending to no preternatural illumination, to no illapses of the spirit, I am obliged to follow the dictates of reason, and square my life by natural instruction; the aphorisms of common ethics are simple and intelligible, they are assented to without effort, and true religion, wherever it is, cannot be inconsistent with their tenets.

The physical world is regulated by fixed and invariable laws, it is harmonic and uniform, the sun preserves an uninterrupted course, the planets perform their functions, seasons keep their rotation, and eclipses are calculated with unerring accuracy ; no jarring or derangement ever impedes their order ; but the wild mind of man, has created such disturbance and confusion in the moral world, that it may be doubted whether the chaos does not still exist, and is only transferred from the material system to the region of intellect ; or how shall we account for the inconsistencies, the contradictions, the frenzy, the madness of man—while we infer great events from profound deliberation, they often spring from insignificant or base sources, the intimations of a concubine, the fumes of wine, a distempered imagination, a morose humour, a transient spleen ; how shall we account for the eccentric deviations of the mind ? why men, in apparent reason, commit extravagant errors ; why every maniac directs his footsteps to Buckingham-house ; and every perturbed and evil spirit vents its mischief on a particular individual ?

Five years ago I quitted, without reluctance, a profession I always abhorred, which, after a perpetual source of uneasiness and mortification, terminated

terminated with loss. I do not owe my present condition to that avocation which has been subject of so much debate and envy. I fancied that in retiring from public life, I had avoided public notice ; but some men hate the elevation they never can attain, and those to whom they are unable to ascend, they would depreciate and reduce to their own level---and men of rank and fortune view with a jealous eye opulence and splendor that is not derived from inheritance, as if there was intrinsic and superior merit in adventitious birth. Abilities have been sarcastically allowed me, as if talents were emblems of knavery, and a knowledge of evil a proof of its practice.

When I have urged a suit, it was to effect a subdolous purpose ; when I have defended myself, it was a cunning conflict to escape detection ; calumny was never idle, sometimes artfully insinuating its dagger ; sometimes wielding a tomahawk : so many transgressions imputed, and no law to punish them ; such a cloud of witnesses to accuse, and not one to prove a crime ; what is the inference from these censures ? Either the laws are inefficient, or I was not culpable.

A generous people should not interfere in private

vate broils, nor goad the emotions of personal enmity; they should protect the object of unmerited persecution, as a champion of the general cause. We reverse the maxims of prudence when we encourage a spirit that may be exerted against its abettors; but I am no longer surprized at folly, or impatient under wrongs. History illustrates, and my life testifies the invincibleness of error, the inveteracy of envy, how confidence is circumvented by craft, and humility trampled upon by oppression.

I do not affect stoical apathy, so many injuries have made their impression---No man is independent, however exalted his condition---he cannot resist the calls of hunger; and if his food is not carried him, he must seek it in the field and in the brook---alone he could not subsist; he would expire at his birth if he did not receive aid; without instruction, he would live without knowledge, and without speech. A state of nature is the fiction of philosophy, and fancied to rear hypothesis; it serves for argument and contrast, but never existed: we are linked with surrounding objects, influenced by the atmosphere, connected with our species, and no creature is independent.

Though

Though the outcry has been violent, it has not discomfited me---a heart unconscious of offence is vexed, but not dismayed ; newspapers may again surcharge their columns, and calumny launch its envenomed arrows, they will not shake my resolution. I shall never bribe an editor to write truth, or supplicate an illiberal barrister to interrogate like a gentleman. It is an era of vicissitude, and in the general fluctuation, an amelioration of morals may accompany political reformation. Justice may assert its prerogative, may disclose the labyrinths of hypocrisy, and surprize the ensnarer in his own toils. Though the cultivation of commerce has raised the condition of mankind, and atoned for the inequality of landed property, yet it is treated as a disparagement, and imputed as a reproach : It is held more creditable to be a member of a fashionable assembly, than director of a trading society ; and more honourable to inherit a fortune bequeathed from success at cards, than from the honest earnings of traffic. In Rome the proud boast of a Patrician was the original occupation of his ancestors, and the most renowned families derived their appellations from their flocks---the Brutus's---the Caprarii---and the Porcii---indicate their etymology, and spread their fame over the ancient world. It seems a crime to have descended from parents
whose

whose genealogy is not inserted in the Court Kalendar, or blazoned in Heraldry ; it seems an offence to have sustained them by my labours, to have preserved a revered mother to the eighty-fifth year of her age, and to have supported all my needy relations ; and yet the means by which I performed a filial duty, that should have deserved a blessing, have incited envy, and occasioned hatred.

My marriage into a noble family gives more umbrage than all my other offences : I dare not be seen in my carriage, lest I remind the spectators of my upstart greatness ; though I am weary, I must not rest myself in it : for so little and rancorous is the human mind, that all those who should see me step into it are a new accession of enemies and slanderers.

The recesses of the human heart are inscrutable ; how often would the fame of glaring and magnanimous deeds vanish, if we could perceive the motives which actuate them ? the sanguine effusions of friendship would be disclosed into a stratagem of self-interest—the enthusiasm of a patriot into a struggle for power—and perhaps an act, that appeared glorious and captivating, spring from a sordid principle.

Few

Few men make religion or morals the guide of their actions.—If a man is just in his dealings, and transgresses no established laws, he has gained a character, and is satisfied—generosity, charity, or mercy are not within his creed; there is no compulsion for them, and he has no motive to use them—he is guilty of dissimulation and falsehood, for they are not crimes which the laws reach—but he pays his debts, and is an honest man:—what artifices are often practised to gain a name; and how often is it acquired by one whose mind is a secret reproach to it—while an inconsiderate man who has deserved it, is indifferent about it?

We are the fools and martyrs of fashion; every incident in life evinces it. The veteran officer retires from warfare to become a devotee; he quits all for God—but meets an offence, and quits God again for honor—he struggles between religion and fame—he sins if he commits murder, he is branded if he don't revenge—fashion triumphs, he quits God, and kills his antagonist.

We have all experienced how fallacious are the superficial conjectures of the world respecting the motives of our actions; many deeds which have been unsuccessful, may have been designed by a sound judgment; many that have not appeared

peared meritorious or brilliant, may have been prompted by a benevolent disposition—it is not always a detestation of vice that urges censure, nor is a boisterous praise of honour an infallible indication of its practice—the vilest passions lurk under a specious countenance—exasperated by superior address, angry from abortive competition, embittered by defeat, all disguise the actuating cause, and under the semblance of just indignation gratify a cankered heart—My family is not of the ordinary size, it is very extensive—the dependants on my support very numerous, many aged and helpless—hitherto I could not be upbraided for want of affection towards relations, or ingratitude towards friends, if their resources are in future narrowed, the sin must fall on those who have been the cause of the abatement.



There is an indissoluble concatenation through all nature; the mineral, the vegetable, the brute creation, and the human species, are all linked and dependent—the chain, though unprecedented, reaches up to heaven; there cannot be a chasm between man and the Deity, but as there are gradations from inanimate nature up to man, so are there

there various superior order of beings from man, till they ascend and approach the first cause: Tho' we have no conception of intelligence out of corporeal existence, perhaps imperceptible essences every where surround us. The sturdy oak decays without earth, animals expire without pasture, and man is as helpless and necessitous as other beings; none is independent but the Creator. Man does not live solitary and isolated,—his riches would be useless where there were no articles to purchase. The advantage derived from society is the cause of its convention; and there is no degradation in vindicating ourselves to the community in which we live, and on which, be our station what it may, we are all mutually dependent. Those who personally know me, I trust, are not inimical to me; for my friendship has been more steady than my resentment; those who are unacquainted with me, have gone on report—have been poisoned by prejudice—have pre-occupied their mind with erroneous notions, and pronounced on conjecture; to these I have addressed myself—let them judge what foundation they have had for their opinions—what propriety there was in their anger; let them be sensible of the injury they have done,—let them feel the injustice—the cruelty they have com-

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mitted, and atone for it by remorse and more favourable sentiments.

Men who would shudder at the thoughts of a murder, forget how often a slander has effected a more excruciating death than the stab of a poignard, invaded domestic peace—ruined a family—and entailed misery on its posterity.

When a calumny is broached, let us be more charitable in future, let us consider who relates it; the motives that urge it, the character of the assessor, the proofs adduced—let it appear incontrovertible before we promulgate it, or we become accomplices in the author's guilt, and auxiliaries to the mischief he perpetrates,



